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WSDA director to meet with representatives of livestock industry

OLYMPIA – Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) Director Valoria Loveland wants to know what people in the livestock industry think about some of the new federal mandates being considered, such as country of origin labeling and the animal identification program. So she decided to ask them.

Invitations to a WSDA Director's Forum have been sent to about a dozen groups representing various aspects of the livestock industry, such as the Washington Cattlemen's Association, the Washington State Dairy Federation, the Northwest Meat Processors, the Washington Fryer Commission, and the Washington Pork Producers.

"I thought it would be helpful to get everybody in a room and talk about some of the issues facing us," said Loveland. "We're looking at a fairly dramatic change in the way the livestock industry does business and I thought it would be good for us to talk about what those changes are going to be, how the industry plans to meet these new requirements and what the Washington State Department of Agriculture can do to help industry meet these new challenges."

The daylong forum will primarily address new federal requirements for a national animal identification program, which will enable someone to track an animal's movement history; country of origin labeling, which requires food products be labeled with the name of the country in which it was produced; and food trace-back program, which will allow someone to trace the history of a food product.

The forum is scheduled for May 27 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Pasco Red Lion. There is limited space available for the public. Anyone interested in attending should contact Gwen Jones at WSDA at (360) 902-1886 by May 24.

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